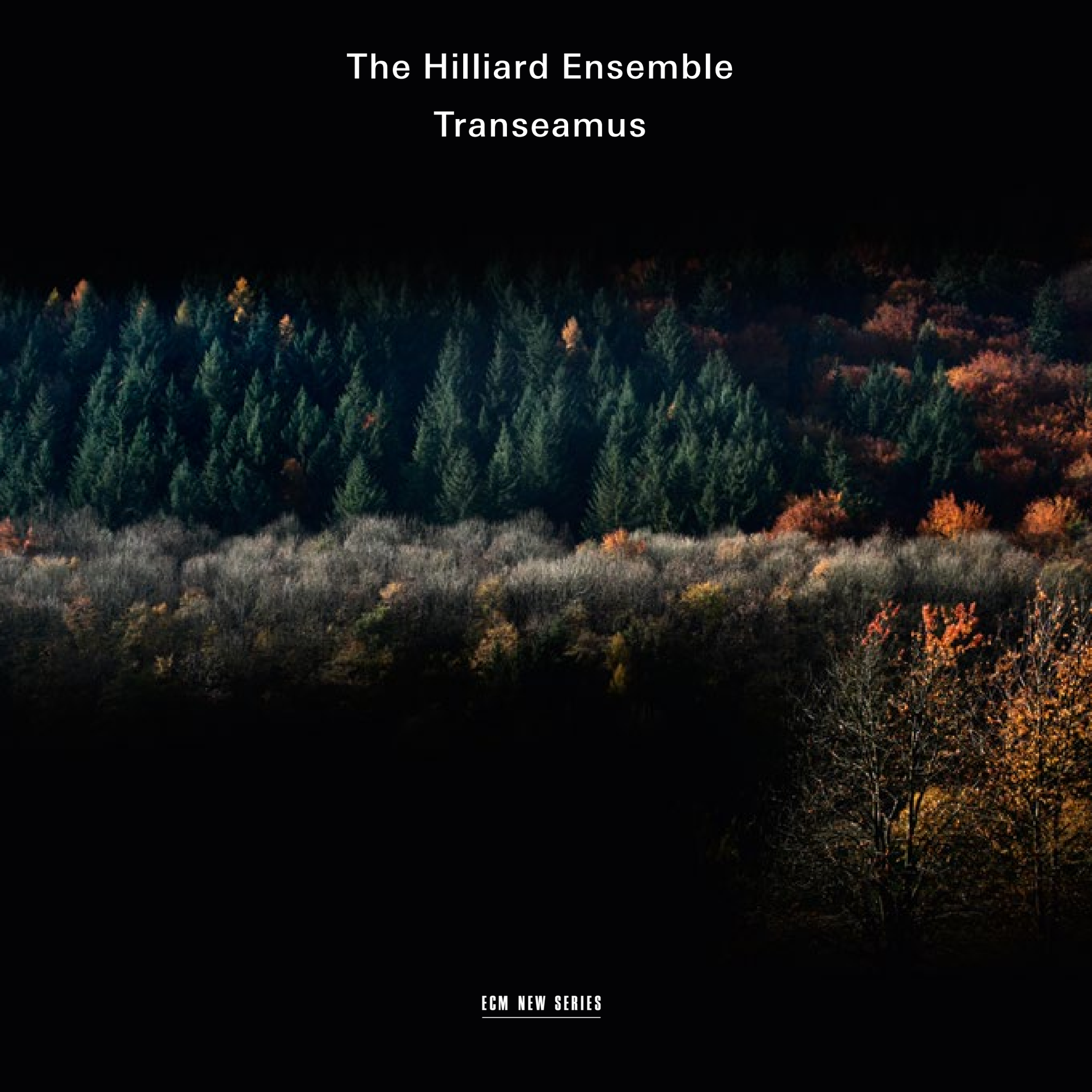
The Hilliard Ensemble

Transeamus



ECM NEW SERIES

Transeamus

The Hilliard Ensemble

David James countertenor
Rogers Covey-Crump tenor
Steven Harrold tenor
Gordon Jones baritone

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Thomas gemma Cantuariae /
Thomas cesus in Doveria

Triplum
Thomas gemma Cantuarie primula
fide pro tuenda cesus in ecclesia,
a divine repentina mire caritate
fulgens matutina vespertina lucis increate
gratia late tibi nova reparate
sublimaris curia regis pro fidelitate
tua a ruina leti bina per te liberate
sunt a fece et ab amaro malo frivolo
a sentina serpentine gentes expiate
et a viciis singularis nuncuparis gratia ditatus
super hinc perfectos et electos tu es sublimatus
rivulo madido pie sanans egros
preciosis generosis gemmis tumulatus
aureis modulo tumulo
cum decore vel honore pie laureatus.
in celis inter cives celicos digne veneratus
Thoma nunc pro populo stimulo
tempestatis caritate fervida rogatus.

Duplum
Thomas cesus in Doveria emulo lesus
a divine repentina mire caritate
fulgens matutina vespertina lucis increate
gratia rivulo patulo
sublimaris curia manens in eternitate
patris a ruina repentina per te liberate
sunt sane tu doctrine medicine serve sanitate
tremulo sub dolo

Thomas, unequalled jewel of Canterbury, slain in church as defender of the faith, shining, through God's wondrous immediate love, far and wide, morning and evening, with the new grace of pure light restored to thee, thou art elevated in the court of the heavenly king for thy fealty; through thee humanity is freed from the twofold affliction of death, from the cesspool of our sins, and from the bitter, wretched apple; it is cleansed of the serpent's filth and of corruption; thou art called outstanding, rich in grace, and hence thou art exalted above the perfect and elect; with the moisture flowing from thy veins thou faithfully healest the sick; thou art buried with admirable, precious jewels wrought with gold in thy seemly shrine, meetly crowned in heaven with grace and honour and properly revered amongst the blessed in heaven, Thomas, who art now besought with burning love to help thy people in the suffering of their misery.

Thomas, wounded by thy enemy and slain in Dover, radiant, through God's wondrous immediate love, morning and evening, with the grace of pure light, through the stream of thy blood, openly shed by thee, thou art glorified, residing forever in the heavenly father's court; through thee all are truly freed from sudden ruin; thou, fount of learning and healing, with thy miraculous curing power save humanity in the

purga a sentina serpentina gentes expiate
dirige singularis nuncuparis gratia ditatus
super Remo atque Romulo tremulo
tu per sanctos et electos pie sublimatus
merito peris in ecclesia decora tumulatus
stimulo primulo
de Sancto in honore et decore pie laureatus
gaudiis inter cives celicos summe veneratus
querulo celo sine fine manens tam beatus.

Saint Thomas honour we

Saint Thomas honour we,
thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.

Al Holy Church was but a thrall,
Thro king and temporal lordes all,
To he was slain in Christes hall
And set all things in unity;
His death hath such auctority.

The king but little while him spared;
Knights in church his crown off pared.
Thus the corner stone was squared
Between clergy and temporalty
To knit peace and unity.

face of its trembling wrongdoing, and, having been purified, cleanse it from the serpent's filth and guide it; thou art called eminent, rich in grace, and, with Remus and Romulus quivering, thou art rightly exalted by the holy and elect; worthily thou diest and liest buried in the magnificent church because of thy first holy suffering; rightly thou art crowned in heaven with honour and grace, and art greatly revered with joy among the heavenly host; so blessed art thou, as thou residest forever in heaven with its captivating sounds.

Clangat tuba

Clangat tuba, martyr Thoma,
Ut liberet se Christi vinea.

Out of the chaff was poured this corn,
And else the Church had ben forlorn;
To Godes grange now were thou borne,
O martyr Thoma!

In London was bore this martyr sothely;
Of Canterbury had he primacy,
To whom we sing devotely:
O martyr Thoma!

Anna mater

Anna mater, Matris Christi
nos pie considera,
quae Mariae meruisti
propinare ubera.

O quam digne veneraris
ab humano germine,
quae Mariam mundo paris,
magno Dei munere.

Nam tu confers spem medelae
sacro puerperio;
esto memor clientelae
huius in exilio.

Anna felix ascendisti;
supra cuncta sidera;
tu in hora mortis tristi
nos ab hoste libera

Sic matrona singularis
digneris succurrere;
extans mater salutaris,
fac nos Christo vivere. Amen.

Anne, mother of the Mother of Christ,
Look graciously upon us,
You who were worthy
to suckle Mary.

How worthy you are of veneration
By mankind,
You who bore Mary for the world
By God's great favour.

You bring hope of healing
Through this Holy birth.
Remember you servants
In exile.

Blessed Anne, you ascended
Above all the stars;
May you, in the sorrowful hour of our death,
Free us from the enemy.

Thus, matchless mother,
Help us;
Most glorious mother of salvation,
Make us live through Christ. Amen.

Lullay lullow

Lullay lullow lully lullay
bewy bewy lully bewy
lully lullow lully lullay
baw baw my barne
sleep softly now.

I saw a sweetë, seemly sight,
a blissful burd, a blosson bright,
that mourning made and mirth of
mang.

A maiden mother, meek and mild,
in cradle keep a knavë child,
that softly sleep; she sat and sang.

O pulcherrima mulierum

O pulcherrima mulierum.
Surge propera, amica mea,
Columba mea,
Formosa mea, veni.

Ostende michi faciem tuam.
Sonet vox tua in auribus meis.
Vox enim tua dulcis
et facies tua decora.

O loveliest of women
Arise my love,
My dove, my fair one
And come away.

Show me your face.
Your voice sounds in my ear.
Your voice is sweet and
Your face is comely.

There is no rose

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
That he is god in persons three,
Pari forma.

The angels sungen, the shepherds
too:
Gloria in excelsis deo,
Gaudeamus.

Leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus.

Stella Caeli

Stella caeli exstirpavit
Quae lactavit Dominum
Mortis pestem quam plantavit
Primus parens hominum.

The star of heaven
who suckled the Lord
Has rooted out the plague of death
which the first parent of men planted.

Ipsa Stella nunc dignetur
Sidera compescere,
Quorum bella plebem caedunt
Dirae mortis ulcere.

O gloriosa Stella Maris
A peste succurre nobis;
Audi nos, nam te Filius
Nihil negans honorat.

Salva nos Jesu! pro quibus
Virgo mater te orat!

May that very star now deign
to restrain the constellations
Whose wars kill the people
with the sore of terrible death.

O glorious star of the sea,
save us from the plague.
Hear us, for thy Son honours thee,
refusing thee nothing.

Save us, Jesus, on whose behalf
the virgin mother beseeches thee.

Marvel not Joseph

Marvel not Joseph, on Mary mild;
forsake her not tho' she be with child.

I, Joseph, wonder how this may be,
the Mary wax great when I and she
ever have lived in chastity;
if she be with child, it is not by me

The Holy Ghost with merciful distens
In her hath ent'red without offence,
God and man conceived by his presence,
And she virgin pure without violence.

Ecce quod natura

Ecce quod natura
mutat sua jura:
virgo parit pura
dei filium.

Ecce, novum gaudium,
ecce novum mirum:
virgo parit filium,
que non novit virum;
que non novit virum,
sed ut pirus pirum,
gleba fert sphirum,
rosa lilium.

Mundum dus flebilem
videns in ruina,
florem delectabilem
produxit de spina;
produxit de spina
virgo que regina,
mundi medicina,
salus gencium.

Nequivit divinitas
plus humiliari,
nec nostra fragilitas
magis exaltari;
magis exaltari
quam celo locari,
deo coequari
per conjugium.

Behold, nature
changes her law:
a pure virgin
bears God's son.

Behold, a new joy,
behold, new wonder:
a virgin bears a son
without knowing man;
without knowing man,
but as the pear tree bears a pear,
the earth creates a sapphire
and the rose a lily.

This doleful world
God saw in ruins,
so a delectable rose
he produced from the thorn;
he produced from the thorn
a virgin queen,
a healing for the world
and the salvation of its people.

Divinity could not
be more humbled,
nor could our fragility
be more exalted;
more exalted
than to be placed in heaven,
equal with God,
through this union.

Ave Maria, Mater Dei

Ave Maria, mater Dei,
regina caeli,
domina mundi,
imperatrix inferni,
miserere mei
et totius populi Christiani;
et ne permitas nos
mortaliter peccare;
sed tuam sanctissimam voluntatem
adimplere. Amen.

Hail Mary, mother of God,
queen of heaven,
mistress of the world,
empress of hell:
have mercy on me
and on all Christian people;
and do not allow us
to commit mortal sins;
but help us to fulfil
your most holy will. Amen.

Ah! My dear son

Ah, my dear, ah, my dear son! said Mary;
Kiss thy mother, Jesu,
With a laughing cheer.

This enders night I saw a sight
All in my sleep:
Mary, that may,
She sang lullay,
And sore did weep.

To keep she sought
Full fast about
Her son fro cold;
Joseph said,
“Wife, my joy, my life,
Say what ye would.”

“Nothing, my spouse,
Is in this house
Unto my pay;
My Son a king,
That made all thing,
Lieth in hay.”

Sancta mater gratiae /
Dou way Robin

Sancta mater gratiae, stella claritatis
visita nos hodie plena pietatis.
Veni, vena veniae mox incarceratis,
solamen angustiae, fons suavitatis.
Recordare, mater Christi, quam amare tu flevisti;
juxta crucem tu stetisti, suspirando viso tristi
O, Maria, flos regalis, inter omnes nulla talis;
Tuo nato specialis nostrae carnis parce malis
O, quam corde supplici locuta fuisti,
Gabrielis nunci i cum verba cepisti.
'En ancilla Domini', propere dixisti;
vernum vivi gaudii post hoc perperisti.
Gaude, digna, tam benigna caeli solio;
tuos natos, morbo stratos, redde filio.
Dou way, Robyn, the child wile weepe; dou way Robyn.

Holy mother of grace, star of brightness,
visit us today, full of compassion.
Come soon, channel of pardon, to those in prison,
as a solace of misery, a source of sweetness.
Remember, mother of Christ, how bitterly thou didst weep;
thou didst stand beside the cross sighing at the sad sight.
O Mary, royal flower, among all women nonesuch,
in thy son unequalled, forgive the sins of our flesh.
O, with how humble a heart thou didst speak
when thou didst receive the words of Gabriel the messenger.
'Behold the handmaid of the Lord', thou didst quickly say;
thereafter thou didst bear the springtime of living joy.
Rejoice, worthy lady, so gracious, in the throne of heaven;
restore thy children, brought low by vice, to the Son.
Cease, Robin, the child will weep; cease, Robin.

Ah, gentle Jesu

‘Ah, gentle Jesu!’
Who is that, that doth me call?
‘I, a sinner, that oft doth fall.’
What would’st thou have?
‘Mercy, Lord, of thee I crave.’
Why, lov’st thou me?
‘Yea, my Maker I call thee.’
Then leave thy sin, or I nill thee,
And think on this lesson that now I teach thee.
‘Ah, I will, I will, gentle Jesu.’

Upon the cross nailed I was for thee,
Suffered death to pay thy ransom;
Forsake thy sin, man, for the love of me
Be repentant, make plain contrition;
To contrite hearts I do remission;
Be not despaired, for I am not vengeable;
Gain’ ghostly en’mies think on my passion;
Why are thou forward, sith I am mericable?
‘Ah, gentle Jesu!’

I had on Peter and on Mawdlen pity;
Forthi contrite of thy contrition;
Saint Thomas of Indes in crudelity
He put his hands deep in my side a-down.
Roll up this matter; grave it in thy reason!
Sith that I am kind, why art thou unstable?
My blood best treacle for thy transgression;
Be thou not forward, sith I am merciable!
‘Ah, gentle Jesu!’

Lord, on all sinful, here kneeling on knee,
The death remembering of humble affection,
O Jesu grant of thy benignity
That thy five wells plenteous offusion,
Called thy five wounds by computation,
May wash us all from surfeits reprovable.
Now for thy mother's meek mediation,
At her request be to us merciable.
'Ah, gentle Jesu!'

John Plummer, who is he? you may well ask – not a household name, but one of the many unsung 15th century English composers whose music encapsulates the essence of our love for this golden period of writing. The Hilliard Ensemble's first ever recording contained music from the court of King Henry VIII and so it seemed appropriate for our final recording to return to our roots, particularly as we have never recorded several of our most loved and often performed pieces from this period.

Many of the composers may be anonymous but their music is certainly not. The sweet harmonies might appear uncomplicated, but this transparency of sound creates a cumulative effect that is mesmerising. The music needs no elaborate interpretation, but rather a focus on the fundamental basics of good tuning and ensemble.

We have included a selection of our favourite two-, three-, and four-part works, which reflect the enormous variety of music being composed at that time. The album ends with a masterpiece "Ah gentle Jesu", that embraces all that I have described. We know the composer's name, Sheryngham, but virtually nothing else. On paper it is a simple dialogue between Christ on the cross and a penitent sinner. However, the intensity of the music is so overwhelming that, from our experience in concert, both listener and performer are left in stunned silence.

David James

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